

# DRIVER'S SEAT

---

CSM Ronnie W. Davis  
Command Sergeant Major  
U.S. Army Armor Center



## The Cavalry Scout

Those whose job it is to pull triggers in war will tell you theirs is a dangerous business. Believe it! Those whose job it is to collect intelligence about the enemy without being detected, will tell you theirs is more dangerous. Then, there is the essence of danger...the scout.

Scouts are commonly referred to as the eyes and ears of the battlefield commander. As the commander's eyes and ears, scouts are considered the most highly trained soldiers on the battlefield. They are required to know more common and specialized skills than any other soldier to accomplish their mission and survive.

Survivability demands that scouts possess courage, strength, endurance, resourcefulness, and agility. These attributes are necessary for conducting their unique mission, operating close to and within enemy lines.

The manual, *Tactics and Techniques of Cavalry*, dated August 1940, provides a clear definition of the scout. "A scout is a trooper trained in the use of ground and cover; in mounted and dismounted movement from cover to cover; in marksmanship; in observation, and accurately reporting the results of his observation." A more current definition from Army Regulation 611-201 states that a cavalry scout, "leads, serves, or assists as a member of a scout crew, section, or platoon in

reconnaissance, security, and other combat operations."

Throughout history, scouts have been performing this unique mission. According to Lynn Montross's *War Through the Ages*, most armies have used scouts in one form or another. One of the earliest recorded accounts is in the year 331 B.C. in ancient Greece, during the time period Alexander the Great conquered Persia.

Cavalry scouts were used in the Americas as early as the 1750s, when the British were fighting the French. A colonial American, Robert Rogers, raised a company of rangers and used scouts to gather information in order to carry out his raids against the French. In that day and age, it wasn't called "going on a recon;" it was called, "going on a scout." It is important to note that Rogers learned most of his scouting skills from Native Americans, many of whom served with him. It is believed those skills created the foundation for the scout's mission throughout U.S. Army history.

Cavalry scouts continued their usefulness from the Revolutionary War through the Civil War. Those familiar with American history can recall the exploits of Jeb Stuart's and John Buford's cavalry; most importantly Robert E. Lee's "blindness" on the battlefield at Gettysburg without Stuart's cavalry, and Buford's initial stand de-

laying the Confederate advance until the Union infantry arrived. Through the Indian Wars, World Wars I and II, and Vietnam, to their most recent role in DESERT STORM, scouts have continued to own the night and gather intelligence.

As intelligence gatherers today, the scout's unique mission is simple — find the enemy! This is considered the heart of his mission — providing the maneuver commander with his most critical information, combat intelligence, enabling him to achieve freedom of action, focus combat power, and overwhelm and decisively defeat the enemy. To do that, scouts perform two primary missions — reconnaissance and security.

During reconnaissance missions, scouts conduct route, area, and zone reconnaissance to obtain information about enemy forces and the terrain within the area of operations. When performing a security mission, scouts provide the maneuver commander early warning, enabling him to concentrate his combat power at the decisive place and time.

To ensure this reconnaissance and security mission, today's scouts use mounted and dismounted techniques and stealth to ensure their survivability.

---

*Continued on Page 43*

# DRIVER'S SEAT

*(Continued from Page 5)*

They only fight as a last resort, usually in self-defense when surprised, or to escape once detected. Scouts are too vital a resource to be used in the traditional combat role best reserved for armor and infantry. Scouts need to be available where and when needed, and woe to the commander who loses his eyes and ears. Much like Lee at Gettysburg, he will find himself going into battle blind.

For future scouts, the news is exciting. Technology is providing more sophisticated and reliable equipment to make their job easier. There are current plans for a Future Scout Vehicle capable of affording the stealth needed to minimize and survive detection. This new FSV will be highly mobile and have a reduced signature. It will be smaller than the Bradley, and will incorporate advanced communications and electronics. It will be equipped with the most advanced optics and sensors to detect the enemy at greater distances.

Future training will be more important than ever. With the new technology being developed under Force XXI, continuous training is critical to the scouts' success. In addition to the initial entry training and the prerequisite NCOES courses, scouts have various other schools and courses they are encouraged to attend. The Armor Center, where scouts are trained, provides additional training, such as the Scout Platoon Leader and Scout Commander Certification Courses. Additionally, scouts are encouraged to attend airborne and air assault training. Scout platoon sergeants are encouraged to attend the Pathfinder course.

There is no other soldier in the Army like the cavalry scout. His importance is immeasurable — and it has been throughout history. Those commanders who fought and won on history's battlefields know this. Because of scouts, they've decisively engaged and destroyed their enemy behind the command of....

**SCOUTS OUT!**